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ABSTRACT

This exit report chronicles the last 20 months of the 3-year demonstration phase of the New York City Volunteer Corps (CVC), whose members worked in teams at various sites to either provide human services or do physical work. These final months were characterized by the following factors: (1) a change in Corps leadership; (2) concern about continued funding; (3) enrollment of fewer volunteers than planned; (4) reductions in staff and costs; and (5) efforts to strike a balance between the goals of serving the city and aiding the volunteers. Yet the CVC produced some positive results in its projects. It was found that the volunteers required close supervision and could benefit from individualized remedial education. They formed productive field teams under the dedicated leadership of the team leaders and coordinators. The CVC rendered valuable services to the city as its mode of operation changed and matured. Other urban areas are urged to adopt and refine this type of self help project. Information is given on the following evaluation items: (1) types and management of work; (2) characteristics of the volunteers; (3) youth development; (4) costs; and (5) findings and conclusions. (VM)

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Public/Private Ventures

399 Market Street
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(215) 592-9099

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Youth Corps Case Studies:

The New York City Volunteer Corps

Exit Report

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Public/Private Ventures

399 Market Street
Philadelphia, PA 19106
(215) 592-9099

Youth Corps Case Studies:

The New York City Volunteer Corps

Exit Report

by Natalie Jaffe
Marc Freedman

Fall 1987

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This exit report on the final phase of the City Volunteer Corps' demonstration period was prepared under the supervision of Alvia Branch, vice president and director of research at P/PV. Site visits were conducted by Dr. Branch, Marc Freedman, Thomas J. Smith and Natalie Jaffe, who was the principal author of the report. Sally Leiderman was responsible for overseeing the collection and analysis of the quantitative data in the report. Michael Boldin provided programming support and Michael T. Callaghan was the copy editor.

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I. INTRODUCTION

At the end of June 1987, the New York City Volunteer Corps completed its three-year demonstration period; this report chronicles observations on the CVC made by Public/Private Ventures during the final 20 months. P/PV first examined the CVC during its planning period and its first year of operation, finding a program that had done an impressive job of start-up; had shown strong potential for coping with problems of productivity, consistency and control in the field; and had mixed success in meeting its three primary goals of enrolling a diverse group of 800 volunteers, providing community service, and advancing the personal development of its participants. The interim report[1] described the corps as it progressed through this developmental period, which started in January 1984 and continued through the end of the first full year of field operations in October 1985.

This exit report to the CVC deals primarily with the corps as it functioned in the field toward the end of the demonstration period. The final 20 months were characterized by a change in corps leadership and concern about continued funding; concomitant enrollment of fewer volunteers than planned and reductions in staff and costs; and continuing efforts to strike a balance between the corps' goals of serving the city and aiding the volunteers. Despite such uncertainty, however, CVC projects continued to produce results and operations in the field continued to mature.

The report is based on field observations made by four P/PV staff members between March and June 1987 (sites visited are listed in Appendix A) and on an analysis of CVC MIS data and reports. Data describe the characteristics of corpsmembers who enrolled between November 1, 1985 (the end date of the interim report) and March 15, 1987. Information on length-of-stay is based on the separation experiences of all CVs enrolled between January 1, 1985 and March 15, 1986.

The research team visited 21 sites during the observation period (about half the projects in the field at the time). We observed work at 16 of the sites and conducted semistructured interviews with work sponsors, site supervisors, team leaders and CVs at all sites. Information from these observations and interviews, as well as the research team's informed judgements, are the basis for conclusions displayed in Table I.1, which rates the 21 projects as weak, adequate or strong along 10 dimensions. A zero on the chart indicates that the relevant source was not available to

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[1] Youth Corps Case Studies: The New York City Volunteer Corps, Interim Report; P/PV, October 1986.

TABLE I.1

CHARACTERISTICS OF SELECTED SITES[a]

Site[b]	Need	Sponsor Satisfaction	Quality of Work	Sponsor Training and Supervision	CV Engagement	Worksite Discipline	Attention to Youth Development	Team Leader Contribution to Project Quality	Team Leader Contribution to Youth Development	Team Leader and CV View of Education Component
Physical Work Projects										
1. Book Arts	3	3	3	2	2•	2	3	0	0	2
2. Greenbelt	0	2•	0	2	0	0	0	0	2	1
3. Staten Island Botanical	2	3	2	3	3	3	2	3	2	1
4. Prospect Park	3	0	3	3	2•	2	3	3	3	2
5. POTS	3	3	2	3	2•	2•	3	3	3	1
6. West Side Rehab	3	3	2	2	3	2	3	3	3	1
7. Community Garden	2	3	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
8. Clothing Bank	3	3	2	2	2	2•	1•	2	2	0
Human Services Projects										
9. Jewish Home	2	2•	2•	3	3	3	3	2	3	2
10. Bronx Shields	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	3	1½
11. Bronx Development	3	2•	2•	3	3	3	2	2	1•	1•
12. Coney Island	2	3	3	3	3	2	2	2	3	2
13. PS 397	3	3	3	3	3	2	2	2	3	1
14. Goldwater	3	3	3	3	2	3	3	0	3	1
15. Visions	3	3	0	2•	0	0	0	3	3	1
16. Isabella	3	3	3	3	2	2	3	3	3	1
17. Respite	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	1
18. CES 236	3	2	2	3	2	2	3	3	3	1
19. Bicycle Safety Training	3	3	0	3	0	0	3	0	3	1
20. PS 192	2	2	0	1•	0	0	2•	2•	2•	1
Physical Work and Human Service Projects										
21. Homes for the Homeless	3	3	3	2	2	2	3	2	3	1

Key: 0 • person not available or observation of CVs at work not possible.
1 • weak
2 • adequate
3 • strong

[a]Reflects judgements by the four site observers, based on their informed knowledge and statements by work sponsors, CVC team leaders and CVs.

[b]See Appendix A.

be interviewed or that observation of CVs at work was not possible. Interviews were also conducted with central office staff, including all field coordinators, other members of the operations department, members of the recruitment and planning staff, the social support coordinator, several members of the education department and the CVC's executive director.

The research team sought to assess CVC in terms of its own goals and reach further conclusions on specific issues identified in the first P/PV report. Therefore, the report addresses first, CVC's service record; second, the nature and experience of the CVs; and third, the corps' youth development activities and their apparent effects. A fourth section provides information on costs and the report ends with our conclusions, a discussion of the tension between CVC goals and reality, and considerations for the future.

II. WORK AND SERVICE

CVC Goal: To provide important and needed services that would not otherwise be provided to benefit the city and its people.

The following assessment of CVC's progress toward meeting this goal describes the types of work CVC does and how the work is managed, and presents the research team's findings on the need, importance, quality and quantity of this work.

TYPES OF WORK

The CVC has been a pioneer in using corpsmembers to provide human services as well as do physical work. In fact, human service projects now occupy about half of all CVC work hours, a figure that is up from one-third in 1985; an additional 15 percent of CVC work projects combine human service and physical work. The remaining one-third of the work load is entirely physical. Since human service projects are of longer duration, a CV who stays one year in the corps spends about four months on physical projects and eight months on human services.

CVC's physical projects average four weeks in duration and involve various types of manual labor, such as painting and renovating living quarters for the homeless, clearing overgrown portions of parks and botanical gardens, restoring tennis courts, and moving and sorting cartons of donated clothing. The tasks themselves often require few skills, but the projects usually provide on-the-job exposure to such fields as construction, painting, groundskeeping and horticulture. Some teams have the opportunity to work alongside skilled craftsmen, and some work sponsors train CVs in such skills as bricklaying, cementing, detail painting, grouting and gardening. One project we observed exposed CVs to the art of binding fine books.

Physical projects in CVC tend to be physically demanding, are generally designed to be performed by a team working together, and result in tangible end products. The CVs interviewed were eager to explain the significance of these visible accomplishments and were proud of their work both as individuals and as members of the team. One CV, throwing debris into a dumpster on the last day of a renovation project, was congratulated for all the work he had done. "WE did!" he corrected.

Human service projects involve CVs in work as paraprofessionals, aides and tutors in hospitals, day care centers, facilities for the physically and developmentally disabled, schools, nursing homes and the apartments of elderly people throughout New York City. The projects generally last four months.

Personal skills and maturity are more important than technical skills in these projects. Many human service projects present CVs, who frequently work either alone or in pairs, with delicate and difficult situations in which inappropriate behavior or errors in judgement could have serious consequences. As a result, the projects are emotionally demanding.

At the same time, the direct contact with clients can be both rewarding and engaging, and the contact with professional staff dramatizes for CVs the need for education in pursuing an interesting career. Relationships with clients are often the highlight of a CV's corps experience; the emotional farewell parties that regularly occur at institutions when a team leaves testify to the clients' deep feelings of appreciation for the CVs.

Projects that mix physical work and human services occupy about 15 percent of CVC work hours. Examples of such projects are at Prospect Hospital, where CVs renovated a facility for homeless families and worked in its day care center; and at a YMCA, where CVs painted the interior then became junior counselors in the day camp.

The alternation of physical and human service projects provides a beneficially wide range of work and youth development opportunities. Physical projects demand teamwork and concentration on getting the job done. Human service projects require human relations skills and help CVs build a sense of being a member of a wider society.

Furthermore, many human service projects split teams up during the course of the work, requiring the team leader to maintain spirit and unity at the beginning and end of each day. Human service projects are also subject to intermittent downtime, which tends to subject CVs to periods of boredom that contrast sharply with the periods of emotional strain. Undertaking an occasional physical project enables the team to work together throughout the day, to expend more physical energy than emotional energy and to progress through an assignment that has a visible beginning and end. Movement back and forth between the two types of project helps keep CVs fresh and interested, introduces them to varying work opportunities and increases the opportunity for all members of a team to work to their strengths and explore their weaknesses.

THE NEED FOR AND IMPORTANCE OF CVC WORK

Although sponsors of work projects would be expected to report that CVC's contribution to their operations was necessary, the case they make is strong and, with few exceptions, P/PV's observation of worksites bears them out. None of the work that

P/PV observed appeared unnecessary or manufactured for the occasion.

The research team defined need in terms of whether the work was beneficial or essential--beneficial in the sense that service to users or clients was greatly enhanced by the CVC work (as seen in park projects and many large institutional projects) and essential in the sense that the important work literally could not have been completed without the CVC.

Projects observed that met both criteria include the rehabilitation of a small building to feed and house the homeless in the South Bronx, which was sponsored by Part of the Solution, a volunteer group that had no funds to pay for construction work; and the rehabilitation of a hotel on the Upper West Side to provide immediate housing for the homeless, sponsored by another community group, The West Side Federation of Senior Housing. The latter sponsor reported that CVC teams had readied more than 50 units in a month at a cost of $75 per room. "We would have had to pay $200 a room to get regular workers to do so much so fast, and we just don't have the funds," the sponsor said.

An example of an essential human service project is the Respite Program, which was organized by a group of agencies in upper Manhattan. The program provides more than a dozen Alzheimer patients and their caretakers with a recreation session once a week--for most, their only current social activity. According to the sponsor, the program would not be possible without the three CVs who come weekly to help the program director entertain and feed the group.

As shown in the first column of Table I.1, CVC work was of clear value to the sponsors, the users of the service and the quality of city life in 15 of the 21 sites observed. The sponsors were convincing in their declaration that the work could not have been done without the CVC. They contended either that the tasks had been structured for performance by volunteers, of which sufficient numbers were not otherwise available (examples include summer park programs, a bicycle safety campaign, hospital and nursing home staff support, school aides, and homebound and handicapped visiting and support) or that the tasks required paid workers but funds were not available (examples include CBO efforts to renovate buildings that would house the homeless and restoration of public parks).

In the five other sites we visited (Site Number Two was not observed), the need was also adequately demonstrated, though not as impressively. While it appeared to the research team that the CVs' work at these sites was beneficial, the team cited one of two mitigating factors. In some cases, they felt that the work could have been done without the CVs, though perhaps not as comprehensively. Examples are a nursing home that already had a

thriving community volunteer program and a school where the CVs were described as "helpful and cooperative," but were not seen as essential. In other projects, the research team felt that CV labor could have been eliminated without a serious loss to the community. Examples include two gardening projects that proved to be of limited accessibility and use. Overall, however, our observation of 21 sites indicated that CVC is meeting its objective of addressing unmet needs and offering services that are of considerable importance to New York City.

QUALITY AND QUANTITY OF CVC WORK

The quality of work in the 16 sites where work was observed was judged by the research team and the sponsors to be strong in 11 cases and adequate in five. In no instance was it judged to be weak. In eight sites, the degree to which CVs appeared thoroughly engaged in the work was strong; in three other sites, engagement appeared to be more than adequate; and in five, it appeared to be simply adequate. Worksite discipline was defined as strong in six sites, more than adequate in one and adequate in the remaining eight. These subjective judgements are shown in Table I.1.

The volume of work also appears to have met both sponsors' and team leaders' expectations. During the demonstration period, the CVC completed more than 1.7 million hours of work. Clearly, CVs get the work done.

Productivity

CVs were observed to work in spurts: when the assignment is clear, they work vigorously and fast. When a task is completed, they tend to socialize and wander around the area until the next assignment is given. Thus, CVs seem to work hard, but not always long. Their own perceptions, as conveyed in conversations with the research team, is that they work very hard; harder, in fact, than many of the permanent staff in the projects to which they are assigned.

The work hours differ from those in many other youth corps (which pride themselves on putting in a full eight-hour day of hard labor, plus several hours of physical training and meetings), but they do not appear to differ much from those found in the traditional workplace. In an eight-hour day, concentrated work occurs for about five hours. One or two hours per day are devoted to group and individual meetings with the team leader; another hour or two is spent at lunch or on breaks. Fewer hours of work were observed in one outdoor project site on a hot day and in another where no toilet was available; in both cases, the teams were dismissed early. Also, fewer hours of work are done during the two days a week that CVs attend classes; in many cases, more than half the team is dismissed at noon to have lunch and travel to

classes that begin at 3 p.m. The few CVs who remain are often not fully productive.[2]

During CVC's first year, questions were raised about the relative productivity of human service and physical work projects, given that supervision of human service projects by CVC seemed more complex and problematic. As previously mentioned, many of the site management problems have been solved and the consensus among sponsors, team leaders and field coordinators is that productivity varies not with the type of project but with the nature of the team leader and the team leader/work sponsor interaction. According to the consensus view, both types of project work well when the team leader is able to command the respect of CVs and develop team unity, when the work sponsor has clear expectations and a firm grip on logistics, and when both the sponsor and the team leader have the same expectations of the CVs.

Level of Sponsor Satisfaction

As shown in Table I.1, all work sponsors interviewed were either strongly or adequately satisfied with both the CVC operation and the volunteers' performance. The 15 enthusiasts were just that: "We couldn't survive without them," "We couldn't have done it without them," "We don't know what we'd do without them," "We love them," and "They're great" were among their comments. One human service sponsor at a large institution for the elderly said the benefits of using CVs went beyond improved service to clients to include staff development: the CVs' freshness and ability to see clients as individuals, she said, served to "awaken" staff from a tendency to view the clients simply as a burden.

Sponsors whose enthusiasm was somewhat tempered invariably said their reservations were due to a specific team that had presented difficulties: "The second of our three teams was a problem," "We've had five teams, and the one before this one made me think about dropping the program, but this one is great," "I wish they could do what our third team did, but what they do do is a blessing."

With only one exception, the 21 sponsors attributed variations in the quality of CVC teams' work to the quality of the team leader and his/her relationship with the work sponsor and site staff. The exception was a case in which the sponsor attributed the team's superior performance in a school setting to the fact that most of the CVs on the team happened to be high school graduates. The consensus among the other sponsors was that unproductive teams invariably result from poor team leadership. For example,

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[2] In September 1987, after this report was completed, CVC rescheduled classes to take place during the non-work education day, Friday, and one evening a week, starting at 6 p.m.

sponsors and CVs reported that, in some early teams, the team leader was unable to command the respect of CVs, develop team spirit or maintain discipline. The result was lower productivity.

The team leaders' own feelings were that poor team performance often resulted when the team leader had an unconstructive relationship with the sponsor. Several sponsors described cases in which a team leader was changed during the course of a team's assignment and a previously difficult team became productive.

A minority of sponsors said they would like more highly skilled CVs; many in human services said they would like more continuity. ("It's terrible when they have to leave so soon after the clients come to depend on them.") Some said they dislike the truncation of the day caused by CVs leaving early for classes. A few would like more contact with the CVC central office to discuss general programming issues. Virtually all sponsors, including those who identified areas they would like to see improved, said they would like to continue their involvement with CVC.

MANAGEMENT OF WORK

Maturation of the operation in the field has resolved many of the worksite management and supervision problems that were observed in 1985. In about half the sites P/PV observed, work sponsors were taking responsibility for technical supervision and training, and leaving everything else to the team leader. In the remaining sites, the team leader handled technical supervision as well. Operations department staff say they have abandoned their original expectation that work sponsors would be responsible for supervision and training at all sites. They now consider it a bonus when this occurs.

Reports of insufficient or delayed supplies or instructions, both frequent problems during the first observation period, had become infrequent by the second series of field visits. However, one worksite management problem remained: the frequent absence of team leaders, who devoted at least two afternoons a week to administrative work at central office and were given ad hoc assignments to training camp. When the team leader was not on-site, supervision was often assumed by either the work sponsor or the most experienced CV, who some team leaders appointed "team captain." Otherwise, the CVs are expected to carry out tasks as assigned by the team leader before his/her departure.[3]

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[3] The "4+1" schedule instituted in September includes time on Fridays for team leaders to attend in-service training sessions and take care of administrative duties previously discharged during workdays.

CVs appear capable of doing the work to which they are assigned, but they require supervision. According to team leaders and other CVs, CVs who leave the corps early include both volunteers who find the program tougher than they expected and those at the other end of the spectrum, who find the work to be insufficiently challenging or interesting. Those who remain in the program are clearly <u>able</u> to do the work; however, close supervision is necessary to ensure that they <u>do</u> it. Many enrollees are not at the stage where they can be expected to work productively, continuously and carefully on their own initiative. Ensuring that the work gets done is primarily the responsibility of the team leader--even in sites where the work sponsor provides technical supervision.

P/PV's interim report defined the team leader's role as pivotal in both production and youth development, and observations made in preparing this report confirm that judgement. Worksite management is primarily the team leaders' responsibility and, for the most part, they appear to do it well. In the 16 sites where team leaders were observed in action, the research team judged their contribution to project quality to be strong in half the sites and adequate in the rest.

For physical projects, the presence of well-defined tasks, a steady flow of work, consistent supervision and appropriate tools--the elements necessary for a sufficient volume and quality of work--are in much greater evidence than they were during the first round of observations in 1985.

For human service projects, specific roles for team leaders have not been defined by CVC. For the most part, definition is left to the creativity and initiative of team leaders themselves, some of whom report a substantial amount of idle time on these projects. In the field, a more active team leader role has evolved since the first observation period.

Many team leaders work alongside the CVs, identify areas for improvement in the program or the individuals that can be discussed later. Most team leaders emphasize the importance of getting the team together at the beginning and the end of each work day for physical training and group discussion, especially when work projects scatter members during the day. The periods of downtime that is characteristic of human service projects are seen by many team leaders as providing "the best" opportunities for youth development activities, even though such periods are sporadic, are often unplanned and usually vary in duration.

Unscheduled youth development activities include group discussion of work-related or outside topics, journal writing and critique, presentations by individual CVs to the group, tutoring of ABE students by GED students and high school graduates, and exploration of possibilities in the job market. Many team leaders use

the free time to lie on the grass or sit on the floor with their teams and, according to one, "rap about life and work." One team leader said: "I make them tell me exactly what they learned that day, pick things out and point to them, concentrate on their short-term goals." Another said: "I talk a lot about how important it is to get an education. A lot of them were heading for the army, but I tell them anybody can do that!" A number of team leaders said they take these moments to give their CVs a chance to confide in a responsible adult about their lives and futures in a way they never could with their families or peers on the block.

CVC reports that many of the team leaders who were judged to be weak during the first year of operations have been weeded out and that those hired recently have been screened more carefully. The team leaders interviewed included former Peace Corps volunteers, athletic directors, youth workers, social workers, a social work educator, a former sergeant in the army, several Master's Degree candidates in social work and several recent college graduates who had a special interest in youth work.

Management of CVC work has also improved as the result of reductions in the scope of project development. As expected, start-up difficulties in new projects have been reduced as rotationals (single projects to which successive teams are assigned) have increased. At the 21 sites observed, most human service projects were rotationals in established institutions. Most of the physical projects, apart from those sponsored by the Parks Department, also involved successive teams, but were usually small, neighborhood-based projects.

Several administrative changes made during the past 17 months have also improved management in the field. Outstanding among these is the change in assignment of the staff that connects the operations department and the field. During the first observation period, liaison was performed by borough coordinators, who were responsible for contact with all work sponsors in a single borough as various teams came and went in their projects. Since 1986, these staff, now called field coordinators, have been assigned to specific groups of teams, which they follow through various projects. This change has enabled the operations department to be more consistent in monitoring and evaluating the performance of teams and team leaders, to provide team leaders with constant support, and to make appropriate changes in staff and team assignments. The change has also benefited work sponsors, many of whom said they prefer working with a coordinator who provides consistent supervision to the teams rather than a consistent liaison with sponsors. One work sponsor said: "Now when something goes wrong with the team, I don't have to say a word. The field coordinator knows about it and does the right thing." According to the field coordinators, who are each responsible for 10 teams, the only losers in the new system are

the best team leaders, who, because they present few problems, seldom see their supervisors.

A second administrative change involved the empowering of team leaders to separate CVs who violate CVC rules, a responsibility that formerly belonged to the borough coordinators. Giving this responsibility to team leaders has increased productivity by enabling the team leader to demonstrate his/her authority. This allows problems to be taken care of on the spot, a situation that carries over to other situations and helps team leaders impress realistic workplace expectations on CVs.

Team leaders report that, despite initial fears, this change has not been counterproductive. They say that they are careful to explain the reasons for disciplinary actions to the CV involved and to the team, and they use these opportunities to discuss the utility of CVC rules and their relation to an employers' expectations. Team leaders say that CVs do not appear to regard their authority to fire as being in conflict with the role of confidant and mentor. The leaders stress that the information confided is never used for disciplinary purposes, but is used instead to help a CV succeed.

Aside from these minor adjustments, staffing in the CVC operations department has been relatively stable, making it possible for the field operations to continue to mature and increase the teams' productivity. The team leaders appear to be a strong, dedicated and creative group of young men and women; the field coordinators allow the team leaders considerable authority to manage their projects and supervise their teams.

III. THE CITY VOLUNTEERS

> CVC Goal: To achieve a measure of integration among corpsmembers, who come from different neighborhoods, income levels and walks of life.

Since the early months of the demonstration, the CVC was intended to be a corps of 800 people who would be broadly representative of all New York City youth. However, this goal has not been met. At the end of the demonstration, the corps had 600 to 650 corpsmembers in the field, 97 percent of whom were black or Hispanic.

The original goal for CV population is now viewed as unrealistic. Based on its experience during the demonstration period, CVC revised the goal, fixing on the 600 to 650 range as attainable and manageable, considering the sizes of its recruitment staff and the estimated pool of potential recruits.

Attempts to enroll a more diverse population continue, but CVC has thus far failed to achieve the diversity that characterizes the young adult population of the city; in 1980, 16- to 24-year-old New Yorkers were 44 percent white, 27 percent black, 24 percent Hispanic and 5 percent other. At the end of our second observation period, CVC enrollment was 2 percent white, 71 percent black, 26.6 percent Hispanic and 1.4 percent other. Since the program's first year, the proportion of black enrollment had declined 4 percent, Hispanic enrollment had increased 5 percent, and white enrollment had remained the same.

As shown in Table III.1, the overall demographic characteristics of CVs changed little between the first year and the end of the demonstration. The table displays characteristics of the 1,261 CVs enrolled during the program's first full year of operation (November 1984 through October 1985) and the 2,206 enrolled during the next 17 months (November 1985 to March 15, 1987).

There are four small but statistically significant differences in demographics between the two periods. 1) The mean age of CVs increased from 17.9 to 18.2, likely reflecting the fact that, during the first nine months of the period covered by the interim report, enrollment was limited to CVs who would reach their 18th birthday during the year of service. In July 1985, CVC broadened eligibility to 17- to 20-year-olds. 2) The ethnic distribution reflects a small increase in the proportion of Hispanics and a small decrease in the proportion of blacks. 3) The proportion of CVs with high school diplomas shows a slight increase. 4) The geographic distribution shifted slightly, though at the end of the demonstration, nearly half the CVs still hailed from Brooklyn.

Table III.1

CHARACTERISTICS OF CITY VOLUNTEERS

Characteristics	Enrolled 11/1/84 - 10/31/85 (n = 1,261)	Enrolled 11/1/85 - 3/15/87 (n = 2,209)
Sex		
Male	58.0%	55.6%
Female	42.0	44.4
Mean Age*	17.9	18.2
Education		
High School Diploma (Graduated or GED)*	21.9%	25.9%
Mean Grade Completed	10.1	10.3
Race*		
Black	75.3%	71.0%
Hispanic	20.5	25.6
White	2.1	2.0
Other	2.1	1.4
Not Married	98.4%	98.2%
Borough*		
Brooklyn	46.0%	46.2%
Bronx	23.1	25.2
Manhattan	16.1	14.7
Queens	11.5	12.3
Staten Island	3.3	1.5
Own Children in Residence	11.0%	9.6%
Mean Household Size	5.2	5.3
Primary Wage Earner	8.5%	9.3%
AFDC Receipt Past 6 Months	15.6%	13.4%
Food Stamps in Past 6 Months	31.8	29.7
AFDC or Food Stamps in the Past 6 Months	34.8	33.3

*Distributions of corpsmembers enrolled during each of the two time periods are statistically different from each other at the .05 level.

Despite these changes, the overall profile of CVC from November 1985 to March 1987 shows that the following demographic conditions remained: slightly more than half of the volunteers were men, less than 10 percent were primary wage earners, nearly three out of four did not have a high school degree (the mean is less than 11 grades completed), about 97 percent were black or Hispanic, and nearly half came from Brooklyn. Although only about one-third of CVs reported having received AFDC or food stamps during the six months before joining CVC, both they and their team leaders reported the impression that the majority of CVs were from low-income families in low-income neighborhoods. This profile of CVC enrollees contrasts with corpsmember profiles of the nine other youth conservation and service corps P/PV has studied, only one of which--Katimavik, the nine-month Canadian program--also did an appreciable amount of human service work and paid enrollees less than minimum wage plus substantial completion bonuses.

Excepting Katimavik, CVC is the only corps that enrolls a high proportion of women. Of the nine corps, CVC has the lowest mean age, the fewest high school graduates, and is one of four corps that enroll more than two-thirds of their corpsmembers from one race/ethnic group. Information reported by CVs on their applications indicates that about one-third come from families that are receiving public assistance--about the same proportion as in the California Conservation Corps (CCC) and a higher proportion than in San Francisco and Marin County, the only other corps programs for which we have this information. Despite this, CVC appears to enroll the largest proportion of disadvantaged youth among the corps P/PV has studied.

It should be noted that although CVC enrolls few white and Asian youth and few from middle-class families, it recruits good mixes of blacks and Hispanics, and males and females, and youth from a wide variety of neighborhoods, levels of education and aspiration, and--as disclosed by observation and discussion with CVs--motivation to "make good." According to team leaders, CVs usually come from neighborhoods whose residents are much like themselves, and most have had little exposure to different kinds of people, parts of the city and ways of life.

The CVs can be roughly sorted into three groups defined on the basis of conversations with CVs, team leaders and field coordinators (mostly former team leaders). The following subjective categories were constructed by the research team in an attempt to clarify thinking about the types and needs of the disadvantaged young people who enroll.

Group 1. These youth, including many in the one-quarter who have high school degrees, are in a transitional phase of their lives, well on their way to adulthood. They are unclear about what they want to do and express the need for time to sample alternatives.

These youth say they joined CVC for the scholarship and the variety of experience.

Group 2. These youth, the majority of corpsmembers, have substantial handicaps to successful living but sense that something better is possible. According to team leaders, a high proportion of these youth are women, who they perceive to be more mature and determined. Also, many represent "the cream" among their alienated peers: the one kid on the block who is not drugging, not stealing, not running numbers, not pregnant and not totally rejecting the parent or guardian who is pushing him/her to get out of the house and do something. Many CVs told of trying, with little success, to get friends to join the CVC. "So why you and not them?" we asked. "We knew what time it was," one CV replied.

These CVs consistently report having joined CVC for "the package." By this, they variously mean having a paying job, "getting a GED," going "upstate" for training, obtaining a work history and job reference, and securing admission to college. Little of this vision has anything to do with process; instead, it has the air of magic: join the CVC and "they" will fix things. CVs respond with bewilderment to questions about why they joined the CVC instead of working at a minimum wage job and enrolling in adult education on their own. The more articulate said that they couldn't "get it together" to do that; others reported that they couldn't get even a minimum wage job because they lack a work history or education credentials.

Team leaders and field coordinators believe that no matter what the CVs say, the real motivation for most young people in this group is a vague feeling that joining the CVC is better than hanging out or washing dishes. Such "somewhat at-risk" youth with a vision of something better--no matter how unrealistic--appear to come to grips with CVC's regulations, respond positively to the team leaders' encouragement and remain in the corps long enough to reap benefits.

Group 3. This group, composed primarily of those who drop out or are separated from the corps within the first month, were described by Group 2 CVs as much like themselves, but with an important difference. Both they and the team leaders say that what this group lacks is a willingness to succeed on the CVC's terms. They say early leavers continue to insist on their own terms by, "doing head games," "trying to beat the system," and "letting the team down."

Peers and team leaders say that these recalcitrant individuals exhibit one or a number of the following characteristics: low motivation; bad situations at home; a history of antisocial behavior, contentiousness and resistance to authority; and limited cognitive capacity. The CVC is not designed to serve such youth and they tend to separate early as the result of peer

pressure, disciplinary action for their defiance of the rules or their own disenchantment.

However, in virtually every team visited, either the CVs or the team leader pointed with pride to one or two of these "bad attitude CVs" who made it in the corps despite their initial problems in adapting. They attribute such exceptions primarily to the determination of a team leader who would not give up. However, such exceptional efforts are made at the team leader's discretion--without any instruction to do so from the CVC and without any training to perform such rescue work.

Several months after the research team visited sites and developed these qualitative conclusions, the quantitative data were collected, cleaned and analyzed. They are presented in the next section. In large part, the data support the impressions gathered in the field. As will be seen, women and high school graduates remain in the corps much longer than men and high school dropouts, respectively, and both have disproportionately higher rates of completing the one-year program.

CV Needs

For the most part, the needs of enrollees are similar to those of most 18- and 19-year-olds--guidance, work experience, education, money, and socialization. Youth in Group 2, the majority of CVs, have additional needs for active mentoring by a respected adult, outside pressure to pursue education, an educational program that addresses their deficiencies, constant reminders of the responsibilities inherent in being an adult, an older confidant to help them handle personal problems and resist "the street," and specific guidance in preparing for life after the CVC.

One new team leader assigned to a team composed of about half six-month participants and half newcomers asked them to write in their journals on the following topic: "If I were a team leader, what would I do for my CVs?" The resulting journal entries, he said, were very emotional. The CVs wrote that they want someone to push them to get an education; someone who will be a big brother or a confidant; and someone who will encourage them without being too critical of their mistakes. For many, he pointed out, graduation from training was the first thing they ever accomplished in their lives.

THE EXPERIENCE OF CVS IN THE CORPS

At the time of the first P/PV report, which covered CVC's first year (November 1984-October 1985), only the pilot cohort of 65 CVs had had an opportunity to remain in the corps for 12 months. Of the 1,216 young people who entered training camp during that period, 674 were still active in October 1985. Therefore,

untruncated data were available only for the pilot cohort. Data on other CVs were provided, but were defined as inconclusive. Data discussed in the following sections are based on the actual separation experiences of all CVs who enrolled between January 1985 and March 15, 1986. Restricting the analysis to CVs who entered the program by March 15, 1986 meant that every corps-member in the sample had the opportunity to stay for the full program cycle of one year by March 15, 1987, when data collection concluded. Thus, the data are untruncated and unbiased.

Completion Rates and Length-of-Stay

Looking at all CVs who had enrolled a year or more before March 15, 1987, we find that 27 percent completed a full year. No other yearlong corps that P/PV has studied showed as high a rate of completion.

High school graduates and women are disproportionately likely to complete a full year (Table III.2). Nearly half (43%) of completers were high school graduates, though graduates represented only 26 percent of the enrollees. Fifty-two percent of completers were women, who represented 44 percent of enrollees. Should the trend toward greater recruitment and retention of high school graduates continue, the proportion of graduates in the corps could very gradually increase.

Of CVs who left the program (Table III.3), about 57 percent had stayed six months or longer. The mean length-of-stay for all corpsmembers is 6.1 months. Again, the CVC is exceptional among yearlong corps programs--no other corps has a mean length-of-stay longer than 5.5 months.

One explanation for this excellent record may lie in the nature of the CVC program. However, the one programmatic variable that stands out from a research standpoint is that CVC is the only corps we have studied that offers a cash or scholarship bonus after six months' service. The chance to get a substantial lump sum may be a strong incentive for CVs to stay long enough to qualify.[4] CVC is the only yearlong corps that pays a stipend

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[4] It is worth noting that 26 weeks of work at the minimum wage, net of taxes, equals about $3,061 ($3.35 an hour X 40 hours a week X 26 weeks, minus $423 in income and FICA taxes); CVC's stipend of $82 a week totals $2,132 in six months. Adding the six-month $1,000 readjustment allowance, which is $810 net of taxes, brings the total for a CVC with six months in the corps to $2,942, $119 less than six months' work at the minimum wage. The comparable figures for one year's service are: minimum wage net of taxes, $5,722 (gross minus $1,264 in income and FICA taxes); one year's stipend in the CVC, $4,264 plus the $2,500 12-month cash allowance, which is $2027 net of taxes. Thus, full-year CVs earn $6,291, or about $569 more than they would for a year's work at the minimum wage. (The net income from a minimum wage job will increase in 1987 as the result of higher exemptions from federal income tax.)

Table III.2

CHARACTERISTICS OF CORPSMEMBERS WHO STAY A FULL YEAR[a] (n = 395)

Characteristics	Percent
Sex	
Male	48%
Female	52
Ethnicity	
Black	75
White	3
Hispanic	21
Other	2
High School Graduate	
Yes	43
No	57
Received AFDC/FS Six Months Before Enrollment	
Yes	32
No	68

[a] Based on the actual separation experiences of all corpsmembers who entered CVC between 1/1/85 to 3/15/86.

Table III.3

LENGTH-OF-STAY
(n = 1,257)

Length-of-Stay[a]	Percent
Less Than One Week	11%
One Week to One Month	3
Two to Three Months	15
Three to Six Months	15
Over Six Months, but Less than 12	33
Completed a Full Year	24
Mean Length-of-Stay	186 days (6.11 months)

[a] Based on the actual separation experiences of all corpsmembers who entered CVC between 1/1/85 to 3/15/86.

that is less than the minimum wage. Other corps pay the minimum wage and do not offer bonuses.

When considering the timing of CVs' departure from the corps, it is noteworthy that 11 percent leave in the first week (i.e., during training camp), yet only another 3 percent leave during their first three weeks in the field. Thus, training camp appears to be functioning as an immediate screen for CVs whose expectations do not match those of the CVC.

Although the mean length-of-stay for all corpsmembers is approximately 186 days (six months), there are four meaningful variations by demographic characteristics (Table III.4). Women stay an average of 6.9 months, more than a month longer than men; high school graduates stay an average of 8.3 months--close to three months longer than dropouts. On average, CVs from welfare families stay in CVC about two weeks fewer than other enrollees and 17-year-olds stay about a month fewer than older enrollees. The differences between males and females and between high school graduates and dropouts are statistically significant; differences in age and AFDC receipt are not. Black and Hispanic corpsmembers (97 percent of the corps) stay about the same length of time.

Reasons for Leaving

In a corps' ongoing process of evaluating its program elements, it is helpful to understand why some corpsmembers leave before completing the full program. Most important to gaining such an understanding is obtaining information on whether corpsmembers leave because of outside opportunities/events or aspects of the corps experience, and whether they tend to leave at different rates according to demographic characteristics.

Half the CVs who do not complete a year of CVC service leave voluntarily, but not to take advantage of outside opportunities. Only about one in five can be defined, in employment and training parlance, as positive terminations, i.e., those that result when CVs accept a job, enroll in school or join the military. Reasons for "other" voluntary departures include family problems, job search, marriage and dissatisfaction.

Roughly half the CVs who leave the corps before completing are fired, largely due to poor attendance or infringement of the rules. Only 2 percent of the noncompleters are fired for failing to attend class, though the CVC rules require termination for failure to attend three classes in a month.

It appears that gender and AFDC status cannot be correlated with whether a corpsmember is fired or leaves voluntarily (Table III.5). However, having a high school diploma can be strongly related and ethnicity also appears to be a factor. High school

Table III.4

LENGTH-OF-STAY BY CHARACTERISTICS OF CORPSMEMBERS
(n = 1,257)

Characteristics	Mean Length-of-Stay in Days for all CVs Enrolled from 1/1/85 to 3/15/86
Overall	186
Sex	
Male	169*
Female	209
Race/Ethnicity	
Black	186
White	196
Hispanic	185
Other	171
High School Graduate	
Yes	251*
No	165
Received AFDC/FS Six Months Before Enrollment	
Yes	179
No	192
Age	
17	168
18	192
19	202
20	196

*Statistically different from each other at the .05 level.

Table III.5

REASONS FOR LEAVING BY
CHARACTERISTICS OF CORPSMEMBERS[a]
(n = 1,257)

Characteristics	Voluntary	Involuntary
Overall	50%	50%
Sex		
Male	48	52
Female	53	47
Race*		
Black	47	53
White	71	29
Hispanic	59	41
Others	50	50
Education*		
High School Diploma or GED	67	33
Dropouts	47	53
Received AFDC/FS In Last Six Months		
Yes	51	49
No	51	49

[a]Based on the actual separation experiences of all corpsmembers who entered CVC between 1/1/85 - 3/15/86.

*The relationship between this variable and the reason for leaving CVC is statistically significant at the .05 level.

graduates are substantially more likely to leave voluntarily, as are Hispanics (25 percent of corps enrollment) and whites (2%).

Scholarship/Readjustment Allowance Choices

Of the 893 CVs who remained in the corps at least six months and were therefore eligible for a scholarship or readjustment allowance, 81 percent chose cash, 4 percent chose a scholarship alone and 13 percent chose some combination of cash and a scholarship (Table III.6).

Comparing the one in four CVs who had a high school diploma with other CVs, one finds that the choice of a scholarship can be correlated with high school completion status; high school graduates are much more likely to take a scholarship than are dropouts, though the majority of graduates also chose cash. In all, 93 percent of dropouts and 59 percent of graduates chose the cash option. Most nongraduates had considerably more than one year's work ahead of them to qualify for higher education. Thus, the cash decision is likely a realistic one, since few dropouts in the CVC would be in a position to take advantage of a college scholarship after one year's service.

The tendency of a CV to choose a scholarship does increase with program completion; only 7 percent of CVs chose to take some scholarship support after staying six months and only 12 percent did so after nine months, but 44 percent of program completers did so. This is consistent with the finding that high school graduates stay in the CVC longer than dropouts.

Many CVs told interviewers they intended to finish high school and get more education. But the notion that, like magic, CVC will provide them with a GED and get them into college eventually gives way to reality. Once CVs are in the corps and attending classes twice a week, the challenge of studying and doing homework can be daunting. As will be discussed in a later section, team leaders report that many CVs have a great deal of difficulty with their classes and the dream of achieving a GED, accepting the scholarship and going to college recedes.

Table III.6

SCHOLARSHIP/READJUSTMENT ALLOWANCE CHOICES
(n = 893)

Option	Percent of All Eligible	Length-of-Stay			High School Graduation	
		6-8 Months	9-11 Months	12 Months	No	Yes
100% Cash	81%	93%	88%	56%	93%	59%
60% Cash/40% Scholarship	4	1	3	7	3	6
33% Cash/67% Scholarship	7	2	0	15	2	15
14% Cash/86% Scholarship	2	0	0	9	1	6
100% Scholarship	6	4	9	13	1	14
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

IV. YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

CVC Goal: To promote the personal development of corpsmembers.

CVC's youth development goals are both explicitly stated and implicit in the program structure. Explicit goals include encouraging a sense of service and promoting social harmony. Implicit goals are improving the education and work-related attitudes and behavior of participants. This section discusses CVC's record in achieving these four goals.

DEVELOPING A SENSE OF SERVICE

CVs who serve for more than two or three months develop a strong sense that they are providing service to those who are at least as needy as themselves, according to team leaders and CVs who have observed individual volunteers' experience over time. Early in their corps careers, CVs focus primarily on the money and the hard work. But those who remain in the corps for several months express a sense of pride and meaning in helping other people who are needy, particularly the elderly, the homeless, and handicapped children and adults.

This pride is evident in such CV comments as: "Now I think about others, that they need me," "I feel much better about myself when I see what I can do for somebody else," "It gets my mind off crime and the streets," "Dealing with people is hard, they need you a lot," "I really got interested in working with the elderly, it makes me feel good." Many CVs are eloquent in describing to a visitor how their work fits into the overall mission of the institution they are serving.

However, none of the CVs we interviewed--including some nearing the end of a full year in CVC--indicated that they thought of themselves as volunteers, though most said their team leaders issue constant reminders. All the CVs we spoke to said they could not afford to volunteer their services and wished that CVC paid more than it does. They refer to "pay" rather than "stipend," and "bonus" rather than "separation allowance." They compare themselves to paid staff in the institutions where they work and complain about being paid less. They complain about having to work weekends in the park, even though they get days off during the week instead. When asked whether they would do the work for nothing, they say no. When asked what they would change about the CVC, they say they would increase wages.

We believe that these two points of view about work are not contradictory and do not undermine our observation that CVs exhibit the sense of service intended by the CVC. The CVs view

their work as a job, not a volunteer assignment. But they don't view it as just a job. They express a great deal of pride and satisfaction in the fact that they are working to help the city and other people. They say they are gratified by helping others, but also say they need a paying job. What many CVs speak of as a future goal is not volunteering but working for a living at tasks similar to those the CVC has introduced them to: working with the elderly, the handicapped, and retarded children; helping the homeless; and making parks safer and more accessible.

It should be noted that the familiar image of the community service volunteer is clearly projected by the team leaders. They tend to be idealistic and have a powerful sense of service that communicates to their CVs. They also have a strong sense of mission--to run a productive program and promote the development of their CVs. It is this sense of mission that may explain why people with graduate degrees, experienced youth workers and other professionals with considerable work histories, would accept this demanding position for only $18,000 a year.

PROMOTING SOCIAL HARMONY

There are very few white, Asian or middle-class youth in the CVC, but there are blacks and Hispanics, youth with varying degrees of economic and educational disadvantage, and a good mixture of men and women. The CVC attempts to include representatives from all these groups on its teams and reports very few problems. In the teams that were observed, youth had formed close-knit mutual support groups that function together in apparent harmony.

CVs speak about the diversity and spirit the CVC has achieved: "Getting to know the kids who speak Spanish is one of the best parts," "I never knew a girl could do cement work so good," "Our team leader threw that guy out for bad-mouthing the white guy on our team...that was good," "Joe has his GED so he helps me with my work for class."

IMPROVING WORK-RELATED ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIOR

"Come, come on time, wear your uniform and do what you're told. That's what I tell them, what I enforce and what I throw them out for not doing." The impact of CVC's regulations--as translated here by one team leader--cannot be measured, since the postprogram labor force experience of CVs is not tracked. However, team leaders consistently report that the CVs make progress in their work-related attitudes and behavior and the CVs concur. Many CVs spoke of their own or their teammates' "bad attitude" early in their service. They credited the team leader's consistency and concern in enforcing the rules to "shape us up." They expressed pride in "finishing something for the first time in my life," in "putting up that brick wall...did you see it?," in "getting my ass here every damn day on time," in "seeing how the TL (team

leader) deals with that lousy boss." "CVC is tough. If you can get through this, you can do anything," was the consensus of one team interviewed as a group.

In turn, many team leaders spoke of their success in reforming "hard cases." They told story after story of young people who initially resisted authority, flouted rules, challenged their teammates and refused to work, then slowly responded to the strictness, caring and insistence of their team leader. Several of these "hard cases" ended up as team captains. They proudly told the research team of their reformation and their plans for the future.

Other aspects of the CVC program that appear to contribute to the maturing of attitudes toward work and adult responsibility include the opportunities to observe other people working steadily on regular, structured jobs; to experience the rewards of collective effort and mutual responsibility; to be exposed to a variety of work and working conditions; to explore the diversity of the city; and to see the value of education.

A number of CVs also reported that CVC gave them a taste for a particular line of work. Several young women said they planned to pursue a nontraditional career in construction. A number discovered an interest in working with the elderly and with handicapped and retarded children and adults.

The majority of CVs, however, were vague about future work plans. Several team leaders said they were trying to collect materials around which to build discussions of job possibilities and ways to pursue them. All team leaders reported that the majority of their CVs, including those who stay the full year, will need a lot of help to make their way into the labor market. Without help, they say, many CVs will likely lapse back into the immobility of their pre-CVC lives. Team leaders felt that they had succeeded in increasing many CVs' motivation to succeed, but saw that motivation alone is not enough.

IMPROVING EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

One-fourth of the CVs who entered the program between November 1, 1985 and March 15, 1987 had high school degrees, either as the result of graduation or achievement of a GED. Of the remaining three-fourths (1,637 youth), only 472 had completed 11th grade and the remaining 1,165 had a 10th-grade education or less.

As shown in Table IV.1, 534 CVs were enrolled in GED preparation courses during the 17-month observation period. That represents 24 percent of enrollees, about the same proportion as those who already had school diplomas. Of the 534 CVs in GED classes, 55 were still enrolled on March 31, 1987. Among the remaining 479, 97 (20.25%) had earned their GEDs during the observation period.

Table IV.1

ENROLLMENT IN EDUCATION PROGRAMS

	Number Enrolled[a]	Percent Enrolled[b] n = 2,206
GED Preparation	534	24%
Adult Basic Education (ABE)	1,019	46
English as a Second Language (ESL)	108	6
College Preparation Courses	282	13
College Courses	60	3
None	482	22
Earned a GED While Enrolled	97	[c]

[a] Based on the experiences of all CVs enrolled from 11/1/85 (the end date of the P/PV interim report) through 3/15/87.

[b] Values add to more than 100% because some CVs were enrolled in more than one educational program.

[c] 4 percent of all enrollees, 20.25 percent of those enrolled in GED classes, exclusive of those still enrolled on 3/15/87.

Although only one in five CVs who enrolled in a GED class earned the diploma while in CVC, the success rate far exceeds that of any youth corps for which P/PV has data; CVC is the only corps in which more than a handful of enrollees achieved a GED while serving.

Nearly half the CVs (46%) were enrolled in Adult Basic Education classes (46%) because they were reading below the eighth-grade level. An additional 6 percent enrolled in English as a Second Language instruction. Of the 1,019 ABE students, 15.7 percent moved on to the GED program.

The reasons given by CVC staff for the fact that only one-fifth of the CVs enrolled in GED preparation earned a diploma and that an even lower proportion moved from ABE to GED classes vary widely. The CVC education department is convinced that the education delivered to CVs by the City University of New York (CUNY) is of high quality and that the CVs' distaste for the classes is the result of (1) an unrealistic view of their own capabilities (many CVs say the classes are too easy but test at the level where they have been placed), (2) discomfort with a curriculum that is organized around skill areas rather than subject areas, and (3) fatigue at the end of the work day. (This difficulty should be reduced this fall when one of the two evening classes is replaced by a daytime class on Fridays).

Members of P/PV's research team did not observe classes themselves. However, we interviewed team leaders, field coordinators and the CVs themselves about their experience with the education component. Team leaders and field coordinators report that they observe and the CVs tell them that the CUNY classes are ill-suited to their needs. They reported numerous incidents in which teachers were not well-prepared and failed to show sufficient interest in the CVs' educational needs. As a result, team leaders have been loath to terminate CVs for violating the CVC's class attendance regulations. This may explain why only 2 percent of CVs are terminated for failure to attend classes.

The CVs themselves are diffident in responding to questions from strangers about their educational experience. The two most frequently noted reports, however, are revealing. One is that the CVs who take classes together talk all the time and are disruptive. The other is that "if you want to get something out of it, you have to do it yourself--you have to think up the right question and make the teacher answer."

A final explanation for the lower-than-expected rate of educational achievement may lie in the fact that CVs are not required to attend classes during the summer. As a result, the average CV, who stays in the corps only about six months, may attend only three months of classes if his/her service spans the summer.

The impression one gets from the field is that CVs who progress in education or earn their GEDs do so with a lot of help from their friends and are more highly motivated than their fellow CVs. Team leaders report that they spend considerable time helping CVs with their classwork, and a number have worked out a system of assigning high school graduates to tutor lower-level achievers on their teams.

V. COSTS

CVC was originally envisioned as a $10 million per year program having 1,000 corpsmember slots. The projected number of slots was adjusted to 800 very early in the demonstration and has since been reduced to about 650 to reflect more realistic expectations of recruitment. CVC's actual costs have been approximately $8 million per year and the average daily enrollment has been 630 corpsmembers.

In the most recent fiscal year, approximately half of CVC costs were attributable to corpsmember payments, including stipends and the scholarships and cash bonuses given to departing CVs who were in the corps six months or longer. Operations and field costs accounted for slightly less than 20 percent of overall expenses, as did central administration costs. The balance of expenses went for training, recruitment, project development and education. Overall, more than 70 percent of CVC's costs went for payments to CVs or staff. Table V.1 sets out costs for fiscal years 1986 and 1987 in greater detail.

CVC's cost-per-corpsmember slot in the last year of the demonstration was approximately $12,820. This cost-per-slot is lower than that of other nonresidential urban youth corps programs. One example is the San Francisco Conservation Corps, in which cost-per-slot was about $16,000 during FY 1986; SFCC pays corpsmembers more than CVC and uses more equipment to do its work. CVC's cost-per-slot in FY 1987 is also considerably lower than that calculated during its own start-up period, when costs were more than $16,000 per slot; the lower figure is primarily the result of increasing the number of CVs in the field while making relatively small increases in overall staffing.

Table V.1

ACTUAL CVC COSTS, FISCAL YEARS 1986 AND 1987

Costs (in dollars)	FY 1986 (7/1/85 - 6/30/86)	FY 1987 (7/1/86 - 6/30/87)
Corpsmembers Payments		
CV Stipends	2,978,015	3,169,772
Scholarship/Readjustment	534,135	1,078,888
Operations		
Staff Salaries	1,578,367	1,380,631
Other Costs	277,517	40,736
Training		
Staff Salaries	173,943	169,412
Other Costs	181,708	319,312
Recruitment/Project Development		
Staff Salaries	300,245	335,903
Other Costs	140,394	76,936
Education		
Staff Salaries	95,037	114,874
Other Costs	75,823	72,171
Administration/Overhead		
Staff Salaries	649,525	647,150
Other Costs	980,577	671,126
TOTAL COSTS	7,965,286	8,076,911

CVC Cost-Per-Slot
(FY 1987)

COSTS	$8,076,911
AVERAGE DAILY CV SLOTS (1/1/86-3/31/87)	630
COST-PER-CV SLOT	$ 12,820

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VI. FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

The CVC was designed to meet three goals: providing worthwhile work and service to New York City, enrolling a diverse group of 800 volunteers, and advancing the personal development of the participants. These goals have not been emphasized equally, a reality that is reflected in our findings.

WORK AND SERVICE

In the view of city officials, CVC leadership and the CVC board, the corps' primary goal is service to provide service to the city. The CVC is meeting this goal with outstanding success. Its work projects make important contributions to the quality of life in the city and many projects would not materialize without the CVC teams. Sponsors of CVC work projects are nearly unanimous in their satisfaction with the CVs' work and their desire to continue the relationship.

Observation of the teams at work found most of them productive, engaged and personally invested in the value of the work, both to themselves and to the people on whose behalf they were working. The CVs do not work long hours, but work hard and consistently complete assignments in a timely fashion.

The CVC teams' performance of human service work (about two-thirds of the work time) has established the feasibility of this type of work for crews of young, inexperienced corpsmembers. As with physical work, the tasks CVs perform do not require well-developed skills, but do entail an interest in and an ability to relate to people. CVs perform such work capably and with enthusiasm for the contribution they are making to an institution's overall mission. Typical human service tasks include escorting, shopping for, and visiting with older people who are in institutions or are isolated at home; escorting, visiting and acting as therapeutic aides for handicapped children and adults; basic aide work in hospitals; and playground monitoring, trip supervising and tutoring children in preschools, elementary schools and day care centers.

Many of the worksite management problems identified during the first P/PV observation period have been moved toward resolution: supplies and assignments appear to be more regular, supervision is provided by team leaders in the absence of work sponsors, team leaders have carved out constructive supervisory roles for themselves in human service projects. The one continuing problem is the absence of team leaders at least two afternoons a week. At such times, the CVs, who require supervision to achieve optimum productivity, do not perform as effectively as they otherwise do.

One of CVC's outstanding achievements is the sheer amount of work undertaken--more than a million and a half hours during the three-year demonstration period. In achieving this record, CVC has shown that an urban youth corps can field as many as 650 corpsmembers while still maintaining the consistency of the program's essential elements among 40 teams working throughout the city's five boroughs.

To manage a corps in a large jurisdiction, CVC has given team leaders substantial autonomy in implementing the corps' basic rules and substantial responsibility in representing the corps to its members. As a result, corpsmembers develop much stronger identification with their teams than with the corps as a whole. But we did not observe that this smaller arena for esprit de corps diluted productivity or youth development.

THE PARTICIPANTS

CVC has been less successful in meeting its second goal, that of achieving a measure of integration in a corps of about 800 young people who are racially, educationally, economically and geographically diverse. In fact, the CVC has fielded a corps of about 650 young people who are predominantly low-income high school dropouts and are almost exclusively black and Hispanic. Nearly half the enrollees come from Brooklyn, one of the five boroughs of New York City, where about 35 percent of the city's eligible population lives.

However, CVC is alone among corps in the United States in achieving equal enrollment of women. According to observations by the research team, it has also developed a good measure of social harmony among men and women, blacks and Hispanics, high school graduates and dropouts.

The absence of more accomplished CVs may have resulted in the development of projects that require less advanced skills than had been anticipated; in our view, however, this has not diluted the quality of service. With proper supervision, the CVs appear to be capable of performing the tasks to which they are assigned. In human service work, they relate very constructively to the clients they serve; many clients and staff of social agencies applauded the "differentness," "energy" and "fresh air" these young people brought into their lives.

The CVC has also established a unique record in retaining young people in the corps. Of all CVs who had been enrolled in CVC long enough to complete a year of service by the time our data collection terminated, 27 percent had done so. The mean length-of-stay was 6.1 months. No other corps that P/PV has studied has shown as high a rate of completion or mean length-of-stay. The availability of scholarships and cash "readjustment allowances"

after six months' service appears to be influential in keeping CVs in the program.

Two demographic variables appear to influence rates of completion and length-of-stay: on average, high school graduates stay in the corps nearly three months longer than dropouts, women stay a month longer than men, and both women and high school graduates complete one year of service at substantially higher rates than members of other groups. These differences are statistically significant. In P/PV's study of the CCC, education appeared to be the only measured variable that was related to length-of-stay.

Of the corpsmembers who do not complete a year of service, half leave voluntarily and half are fired, mostly for chronic attendance problems, insubordination or poor performance. Again, having a high school diploma is an influential variable--graduates who do not stay the full term are substantially more likely to leave voluntarily than nongraduates who leave the corps early. Ethnicity is also a factor, with Hispanics tending to leave voluntarily more frequently than black corpsmembers. Gender and welfare recipiency cannot be correlated with either voluntary or involuntary reasons for early departure.

Despite CVC's generous scholarship option, which offers $5,000 to CVs who complete one year in the program and $2,500 to those who complete six months, only one in five eligible CVs, including only 41 percent of the high school graduates, chose to recieve scholarship money. The lump sum option of $1,000 at six months and $2,500 at 12 months appears to be more attractive to CVs, particularly after working for $82 a week. Part of the explanation for this is that most CVs are still too far from a high school diploma or GED when they leave the corps for the scholarship option to be immediately attractive; however, even high school graduates chose the cash bonus at a higher rate.

YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

Assessing CVC's success in achieving its third goal, promoting the personal development of corpsmembers, is difficult, largely because the goal is vague and is interpreted differently by various members of the CVC staff.

In terms of fulfilling certain explicit program intentions, the CVC record is solid:

Sense of service. CVs who serve more than several months appear to develop a sense of pride and accomplishment in providing service to needy people. Although they do not define themselves as volunteers, they say that CVC experience has aroused in them a growing interest in pursuing work that benefits people in need.

Social harmony. The integration of and harmony among the various demographic groups serving in the corps is notable. Although the CVC has recruited few white or Asian youth, few middle-class youth and few high school graduates, it has recruited mixes of blacks and Hispanics, men and women, and high school graduates and dropouts, as well as a substantial number of youth who have spent most of their lives in one neighborhood. These youth and their team leaders consistently comment on the eye-opening experience of men working shoulder-to-shoulder with women, of blacks and Hispanics getting to know each other, of high school graduates tutoring dropouts, of "bad attitude" youth being encouraged to shape up by their teammates, and of youth gaining exposure to the wide variety and opportunities of life in the city. The members of a CVC team are typically very close and supportive of each other, a situation described by CVs and team leaders as "like a good family."

In terms of CVC's less well-defined goals, the results are mixed:

Work-related attitudes and behavior. Team leaders report that CVs have made progress in work-related attitudes and behavior. The CVs, too, remark on each others' progress. They specifically mention learning not to let the team down, observing the sponsor's staff working on structured jobs, being exposed to a variety of work opportunities, seeing the value of education and, most frequently, responding to the requirements and encouragement of their team leaders.

Education. Among youth corps studied by P/PV, CVC has the best record of GED achievement: 97, or 20.25 percent, of the CVs enrolled in GED classes had received diplomas by March 1987. This represents one in five of the CVs who enrolled in the classes and a very small proportion of total enrollees, who read, on average, at the 7th- to 8th-grade level.

Other corpsmember needs. The CVC is meeting some of the needs that have been identified by team leaders and field coordinators, but for which no program components are in place. These needs include those for personal counseling, help in progressing in the educational program, and guidance and information in planning for the future.

Team leaders with the inclination and skill to help in these areas do so on their own initiative, without formal resources or training from the CVC central office. They make themselves available as adult confidants and suggest social agencies that might offer help with personal problems; tutor or arrange for tutoring by CVs with higher educational achievement; compile information about jobs, job searching techniques and interviewing skills; and prod CVs to set their sights on postsecondary education.

COSTS

CVC was able to achieve its record of service and youth development at the cost of about $13,000 per-CV-slot in FY 1987. This cost is lower than that of any other nonresidential urban youth corps. The San Francisco Conservation Corps, for example, had a cost-per-slot of $15,971 during FY 1986.

CVC's cost-per-slot in FY 1987 is considerably lower than the $16,000 cost-per-slot that marked its start-up period. This reduction is primarily the result of increasing the number of CVs in the field while increasing the number of staff only minimally.

CONCLUSIONS

CVC was initially envisioned as a volunteer service program for New York City that would involve a heterogeneous group of young people who do not require extensive services themselves. By securing an allocation of $27 million for CVC's three-year demonstration period, the mayor's staff intended to initiate a program that would show the promise of national youth service in an urban setting.

In accordance with this vision of the CVC and with the expectation that CVs would include a substantial portion of middle-class youth and high school graduates, a program model was designed that included a small weekly stipend to cover the costs associated with volunteering, a $5,000 scholarship to be given at the end of one year, and great faith in the inherent youth development potential of service itself. In reality, CVC has been a program that provides services to the City of New York primarily through the work of low-income, poorly educated young people, almost all of whom are black and Hispanic. These youth define their $82 dollar a week stipend as pay and do not view themselves as volunteers; only one in four are high school graduates and fewer than one in five have taken advantage of the scholarship option. Nevertheless, these youth have accomplished important, needed work in the city and, according to their supervisors and themselves, have displayed personal growth during their term of service.

CVC staff who work closely with these young people, however, stress that while CVs have shown themselves capable and enthusiastic in serving the city and its needy citizens, they are quite needy as well. They require close supervision and could benefit from individualized remedial education, support services and career guidance that go beyond the personal development engendered by the actual work process. Whether CVC produces an impact on the postprogram experience of CVs cannot be determined on the basis of available information. This would require a longitudinal follow-up study in which outcomes for former CVs are

compared with those of members of a comparison group who did not participate in CVC.

The disparity between the heterogeneous CVC originally envisioned and the relatively homogeneous group of corpsmembers actually recruited has produced for CVC what some staff refer to as the corps' "identity crisis," i.e., the existence of two different visions of what the CVC should strive to become. Both visions differ in important respects from the program developed during the demonstration.

One perspective stresses CVC's rededication to the original ideal of recruiting a racially, economically and educationally diverse group of young people who would serve to exemplify how a national youth service program could succeed in urban communities throughout the country. This view emphasizes the provision of service to the city and envisions youth development primarily through the work process, team structure and natural interchange between a more heterogeneous group of CVs. Proponents argue that enrolling CVs from different socioeconomic backgrounds would expose disadvantaged corpsmembers to constructive role models both in terms of work maturity and aspirations.

The rival view puts little faith in the prospects for recruiting a more diverse group of CVs, instead stressing acceptance of the current composition of the corpsmember population. Proponents of this view recommend that the corps address the special needs of the at-risk youth it serves by making direct services to youth a priority of equal weight to provision of services to the city. They maintain that while the CVs derive many personal benefits from participation in the team and work processes, CVC fails to ensure that these benefits will endure. Primarily, they contend that CVC encourages corpsmembers to aspire to a college education, but doesn't offer them an educational program that will make the goal realistic; gives them a taste for working productively, but doesn't help them translate this experience into future employment through career development and placement efforts; and asks them to develop a sense of service through helping needy New Yorkers, without acknowledging and addressing their own needs for support and counseling services.

The tension between these visions of CVC is in some ways common to the pressures faced by all youth corps. In the CVC, however, it is heightened by a pair of factors unique to this program: the importance it has placed on being not only a service program but also a national service model with implications beyond the particular circumstances of New York City, and the fact that the CVC corpsmember population appears to be more disadvantaged than that of the other youth service corps programs P/PV has studied.

The two visions of CVC--as a national service program and as a program for at-risk youth--each have important constituencies.

CVC's board and its founder and sponsor, the City of New York, urge dedication to the original goals of heterogeneity among corpsmembers and press the corps to enroll a more ethnically, economically and educationally diverse mix of CVs. CVC's team leaders and field coordinators argue for accepting the current makeup of the CVC and addressing the unmet needs of these youth.

Facing pressure from both sides, CVC management has sought to both diversify the corps and address some urgent needs of current corpsmembers. This dual strategy derives from a firm commitment to the ideals of national service and a simultaneous recognition that CVC, whatever its recruitment success, will always include a substantial number of at-risk youth. The strategy is also dedicated to protecting a program that, as this report has indicated, has already been succeeding in a number of important ways.

The question of CVC's proper priorities was brought into sharper relief as the three-year demonstration period drew to a close and the city opened up consideration of CVC's future funding earlier this year. The result was continued support from the city for the year-round corps plus a CVC summer program for in-school 16-year-olds, which enrolled 39 percent Asian and 11 percent white youth during the summer of 1987. At the same time, CVC planned to reduce the work week from five to four days in September, in order to give additional emphasis to education and other youth development activities. The fifth day, Friday, will include one of the two weekly CUNY class meetings as well as team, corps and team leader training sessions.

As CVC continues to experiment with new strategies for recruitment and youth development, its experience over the past three years suggests that the corps will likely be able to exercise much more control over efforts to improve services for disadvantaged youth than over enrolling a more diverse population. CVC's experience has consistently been that white and Asian youth and more advantaged youth of any race are reluctant to join the year-round corps. While new recruitment tactics might improve the picture, they are unlikely to effect a fundamental change.

Should diversity continue to prove elusive, an alternative would be to turn full attention to enriching the program model's ability to serve the population currently enrolled. Such an effort would build on CVC's proven strengths while addressing two of New York City's greatest problems--the demand for service projects to help its ailing infrastructure and needy citizens, and the plight of its disadvantaged minority youth.

Virtually every city faces similar problems, and CVC has already established itself as a model of national significance in this area, albeit one still in need of refinement. While today's CVC is not the model that inspired its creation three years ago, it

is of no less importance for advancing the causes of service to youth, service to the city and service to the nation.

Appendix A

CVC Sites Visited by the Research Team

1. Center for Book Arts, (Manhattan). Work sponsor: Candace Langhoff; team leader: Felicita Morin; interviewees: work sponsor, 6 CVs. Site visits: 6/24

2. Greenbelt, (Staten Island). Work sponsor: Jim Ross; team leader: Mark Hill; interviewees: work sponsor, team leader, 7 CVs. Site visit: 6/23

3. Staten Island Botanical Ardens, (Staten Island). Work sponsor: Leonard Bessor; team leader: Robert Danberg; interviewees: work sponsor, team leader, 3 CVs. Site visit: 6/23

4. Prospect Park Tennis Courts, (Brooklyn). Work sponsor: Ed Toth; team leader: Edwin Figueroa; interviewees: team leader, 6 CVs. Site visit: 3/26

5. Part of the Solution (POTS), (South Bronx). Work sponsor: Pasquale Stroccia; team leader: Alton Owens; interviewees: work sponsor, team leader, 5 CVs. Site visit: 5/8

6. West Side Federation of Senior Housing, (Manhattan). Work sponsor: Laura Javis; team leader: Arthur Glover; interviewees: work sponsor, site supervisor, team leader, group interview with 12 CVs. Site visit: 6/24

7. Holy Deliverance Church of God Community Garden, (Brooklyn). Work sponsor: Elder Childs; team leader: Frank Silva; interviewees: work sponsor, site supervisor Viris Preston. Visits at 11:30 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. on a sunny day found no one on site. Site visit: 6/24

8. Mayor's Voluntary Action Center (Manhattan). Work sponsor: Millie Mendez; team leader: Ernest Verdel; interviewees: work sponsor, 5 CVs; Site Visit: 6/22

9. Jewish Home & Hospital, (Bronx). Work sponsor: Risa Landsman; team leader: Nelly Velez; interviewees: work sponsor, 5 CVs. Site visit: 6/22

10. Shields Institute, (Bronx). Work sponsor: Joan Laufer/Charles Smith; team leader: Beth Goetting; interviewees: Work sponsor, team leader, 7 CVs. Site visit: 6/22

11. Bronx Developmental Center, (Bronx). Work sponsor: Nettie Evans; team leader, Wendy Whitcomb; interviewees: work sponsor, team leader, 6 CVs. Site visit: 5/8

12. Coney Island Hospital, (Brooklyn). Work sponsor: Annie Davidson; team leader: Leslie Whiten; interviewees: work sponsor, team leader, 6 CVs. Site visit: 5/7

13. P.S. 397, (Brooklyn). Work sponsor: Marcia Levine; team leader: Rebecca King; interviewees: work sponsor, team leader, 7 CVs. Site visit: 3/26

14. Goldwater Memorial Hospital, (Manhattan). Work sponsor: Tammy Carlisle; team leader: Michael Williams; interviewees: work sponsor, 7 CVs. Site visit: 3/25

15. VISIONS, (Manhattan). Work sponsor: Alan Cohen; team leader: Bridget Regan, interviewees: work sponsor: team leader: Site visit: 3/25

16. Isabella Geriatric Center, (Manhattan). Work sponsor: Leslie Foster, Dir. of volunteers; team leader: Andres Accsta; interviewees: work sponsor, team leader, 3 CVs. Site visit: 5/7

17. Fort Washington Houses Senior Center Respite Program, (Manhattan). Work sponsor: Lucy Ezralow, team leader: Andres Acosta; interviewees: work sponsor, sponsor's site supervisor, volunteer, 4 CVs including team captain. Site visit: 5/7

18. Community Elementary School 236, (Bronx). Work sponsor: Clara Burgess, principal; team leader: Sharon Benson; interviewees: work sponsor, two teachers, office manager, team leader, 5 CVs, one Special Project CV. Site visit: 5/8

19. Prospect Park Bicycle Safety Project, work sponsor training at Fort Greene Park (Brooklyn). Work sponsor: Maggie Landis, Urban Park Service; team leader: Gwen Haywood; interviewees: two Urban Park rangers, team leader, 4 CVs. Site visit: 6/24

20. P.S.192 (Manhattan). Work Sponsor: Felix Polanko (principal); team leader: Anastasios Kalomiris; interviewees: Work sponsor, team leader, Site visit: 6/22

21. Homes for the Homeless, (Bronx). Work sponsor: Yvonne Burns; team leader: Charles Jones; interviewees: work sponsor, team leader, 5 CVs. Site visit: 5/8